

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## New Hampshire Health Care Cost Website

**Concord, New Hampshire – February 27, 2007--**Commissioner Roger Sevigny announced today that the new Healthcost website will be up and running on February 28, 2007. The website will provide comparative price information on the cost of common health care services across different hospitals and physicians and different insurance carriers. For the first time, individuals will have access to information about how much a health care service costs before they obtain that service.

Individuals who have health insurance, as well as uninsured persons, can now, by using the Healthcost website, obtain an estimate of how much the service is likely to cost them before they receive care from a physician or a hospital. Not only will consumers of health care be able to compare the cost of service between different providers, the Healthcost website will also allow price comparisons to be made between insurance carriers and between the pricing for the uninsured and the insured. Examples of the services included in the website are: emergency room visits, arthroscopic knee surgery, colonoscopy, hernia repair, gall bladder removal, tonsillectomy, kidney stone removal, mammogram, and common x-rays and ultrasounds.

In announcing the release of the Healthcost website, Commissioner Sevigny commented that the department developed the website in response to strong public demand for price transparency. Commissioner Sevigny noted that with the shift away from traditional managed care products to consumer directed health insurance individuals are starting to pay a greater portion of health care costs. Given that shift of costs to the individual, Commissioner Sevigny said that “it is simply not fair to ask people to pay a bill for health care services without first giving them good information about the cost of those services. With the new comprehensive health care information system, the insurance department was uniquely positioned to develop this resource for the people of the state.”

In addition to price information, the HealthCost website also provides basic information to assist consumers with understanding health insurance products and insurance terminology. The site includes a number of frequently asked questions and explains the

differences between HMOs, high deductible health plans (HDHPs), health savings accounts (HSAs), and flexible spending accounts (FSAs), as well as co-insurance, co-pays and deductibles. The website is a major revision from the first pilot Healthshop website that showed a range of health care price information for certain procedures.

Commissioner Sevigny complemented the work of the Commissioner's Advisory Group that was originally formed in 2004 to assist the department in addressing existing market barriers to the development of consumer based insurance products. The Advisory Group includes representatives from business, the insurance industry, the Department of Health and Human Services, health care providers, and independent policy groups, and has met regularly to work on the development of the site.